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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR (BRYZA) AND EUR/ACE (ADAMS)

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [OSCE](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: KOCHARIAN COMPLAINS TO EU AMBASSADORS ABOUT N-K
AND RUSSIA-GEORGIA, COMMITS TO OSCE OBSERVERS

Classified By: CDA A.F.Godfrey for reason 1.4 (b, d)

Summary

¶1. (C) In a meeting with EU Heads of Mission on October 27, President Kocharian was deeply pessimistic about chances for a settlement on Nagorno-Karabakh, resigned that Armenia would pay a greater cost for poor Russia-Georgia relations than either of the two parties, and expressed some frustration at U.S. calls for early OSCE observers for elections, but committed to an invitation in due course. End Summary.

EU Heads of Mission Meet with Kocharian

¶2. We got detailed read-outs of President Kocharian's semi-annual meeting with EU Ambassadors resident in Yerevan from the UK Ambassador, Polish Ambassador and also from one of President Kocharian's key staffers. Both Ambassadors said that the President seemed generally pessimistic and gloomy on the eve of his visit to Moscow.

Negative on Nagorno-Karabakh

¶3. (C) The President was reportedly deeply pessimistic about any chances for success in negotiations for a settlement on N-K. He said that he would not meet with President Aliyev and that the only reason FM Oskanian had met with FM Mammadyarov in Paris on October 24 was because of his deep respect for the Minsk Group co-chairs, who had asked him to allow the meeting to go ahead. He called the GUAM group action at UNGA a "manipulation" and "would not stand for it." He said that while he had been charged by the people residing in Nagorno-Karabakh to negotiate on their behalf, Armenia's next president would likely not have this mandate; Azerbaijan would have to negotiate directly with the "NKR." In response to a question about why Armenia had not done more to prepare its population for peace, Kocharian stated plainly that he did not think it appropriate when "he might have to mobilize" Armenia's citizens for a very different purpose.

Russia - Georgia

¶4. (C) Kocharian said that he was deeply concerned about the impact on Armenia of deteriorating relations between Russia and Georgia, but that Armenia would not take sides. While he said that the effects of the "blockade" on Armenia were so far not serious, he did not know how long Armenia would remain insulated. He expressed frustration at the level of personal animosity between leaders in Russia and

Georgia and declared that Armenia was more interested in good relations between Russia and Georgia than either Russia or Georgia was. When asked if he would consider a mediator's role, Kocharian said he would consider it, but that would be a risky step, and could result in worsening relations with one or even both sides.

On Election Observers and Kocharian's Anti-American Tirade

15. (C) When pressed about Armenia's plans to invite long-term observers for elections expected to take place in May 2007, Kocharian became agitated and emotional. He said that "of course" the government would invite both long-term and short-term observers, but Armenia's internal procedures were not yet complete. He complained about calls for early invitations by certain visitors (a clear reference to USOSCE Ambassador Finley's recent visit) and pressed EU Ambassadors to ensure that the majority of observers were "not all from one country" as they had been in the past.

16. (C) Kocharian complained bitterly about the role of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Armenia and told Ambassadors that he had "written letters" to the USG outlining his criticisms. He said that in addition to training its own local election observers, NDI was sending them abroad, including to Ukraine, for training as well. He said that NDI continued its activity to form an opposition electoral bloc. The Polish Ambassador, who has been in Armenia for nearly three years, said that he had not seen Kocharian demonstrate this level of anti-Americanism in the past.

Comment

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17. (C) Kocharian's expression of pessimism on N-K mirrors the message he sent to NATO Special Rep Bob Simmons on October 12. We have no way of telling whether it is genuine or a negotiating tactic, but all those present at the meeting took it at face value. While the complaint about NDI is not news, Kocharian's decision to speak so openly about it outside of U.S. - Armenia channels is unfortunate. Kocharian was evidently still put out by Amb. Finley's public expression of disappointment at not being received by the president during her visit. Nonetheless, Kocharian made a commitment to inviting both long-term and short-term observers in advance of Armenia's parliamentary election.
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